

PRESS RELEASE

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Madison, Wisconsin -- Stephen P. Sinnott, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Robert D. Burgess, DOB: 5-24-74, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was sentenced yesterday by Chief Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 65 months in federal prison, to be followed by five years of supervised release, for conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute cocaine. Burgess pleaded guilty to this charge on August 1, 2005.

The charges against Burgess arose from an investigation of cocaine distribution in the Eagle River and Rhinelander areas by Burgess, Robert J. Smith, DOB: 12-13-72, and Christopher L. Richter, DOB: 8-26-74, both of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, between January 2002 and August 2002. Burgess and the others drove from Milwaukee to northern Wisconsin on the weekends where they sold cocaine to local customers. The local customers either consumed the cocaine or distributed it to others. The investigators reconstructed the criminal activities of Burgess and his associates through phone records, hotel receipts, and witness testimony. Burgess was released from incarceration in April 2002, and joined the conspiracy after it already had been operating for four months.

Smith was sentenced on November 22, 2004 to 188 months in federal prison for

his role in the offense. Richter, who pleaded guilty to the same charge on June 20, 2005, was sentenced to 108 months in federal prison on September 23, 2005.

United States Attorney Sinnott praised the work of the North Central Drug Task Force and called the sentence a strong message to others distributing cocaine.

The charges against Burgess were the result of an investigation conducted by the North Central Drug Task Force. Prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter M. Jarosz.

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